

Response to Office action 7/14/2005
Response submitted September 29, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-12 are now in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 3-11 are withdrawn from consideration. Claim 12 has been added. The new claim is a variation of the original claim 1 and finds specific support in the description of the drawing figures, including the embodiments of Figs. 1-4 and the alternative embodiment of Fig. 5.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected as being obvious over the combined teachings of Theurer et al. (US 5,826,860) and Christison (US 4,624,450) under 35 U.S.C. § 103. We respectfully traverse.

The Examiner's statements in support of the rejection have been noted. For example, the sentences "whether or not the tension by the tensioning device is applied 'gradually'" and "to facilitate a more measured application of tension to the catenary cable" suggest that the claims may not have been properly understood. On carefully reviewing the claims, the Examiner's interpretation – while certainly not intended – may not necessarily have been excluded. We have amended claim 1 and we have added claim 12 in an effort to clearly define the invention and to exclude the prior art.

The term "gradually" was, and is, not intended as a temporal modifier. That is, the "gradual" is synonymous with "step-by-step" and it describes the increase in the cable tension from one member of the friction winch to another member of the

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friction winch. The term "gradually," therefore, refers to location, and it does not refer to the time domain.

The invention deals with an increase in the cable tension between the wheels of the friction winch, i.e., within the tensioning device. Reference is had, by way of example, to the specification:

With a solution of this kind, it is possible in an advantageous way to increase the tension forces, acting upon cable grooves of the winch wheels, in steps from one winch wheel to the next in order to thus improve the force grip of the cable, until finally the desired installation tension comes to bear at the last winch wheel.

Specification, page 3, paragraph [0008]. It is clear, from the totality of the disclosure that slippage of the catenary cable in the cable groove can be safely avoided.

The combined teachings of Theurer et al. and Christison clearly have little to do with this invention. There, the combined teachings would at most lead to a machine in which the pull-off tension of the cable is measured with a force sensor. It is not possible with the devices of Theurer et al. and Christison to gradually (i.e., step by step) increase the tension between the winch wheels, and it is certainly not obvious from those teachings.

In summary, none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the method steps of claims 1, 2, or 12. These claims are patentable over the art of record. Reconsideration and the allowance of claims 1, 2, and 12 are solicited.

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Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, or should he still be of the opinion that the claims are not yet in condition for allowance, counsel herewith requests a telephone interview. Applicants are eager to cooperate with the Examiner in presenting claims that are clearly patentable over the art and that properly define the invention. The Examiner's cooperation is respectfully requested as well.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicant(s)

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